



Australian Government

**Department of Immigration
and Border Protection**

Strategy Handbook

March 2016

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Introduction

The term “strategy” can mean many different things to many different people. For some, it is a plan of action designed to achieve a long-term aim. For others, it can refer to manoeuvring troops into position before battle, or actions to help gain a competitive edge.

For the Department¹, strategy provides vision and direction – the goalposts for which all policy, planning and tactical operations should aim. The Department’s approach is to write strategies that are simple, useful and easily understood by anyone in the Department, with or without any prior knowledge or expertise.

To match this approach, the *Strategy Handbook* (the handbook) is not an exhaustive guide to strategy theory or implementation. Instead, it is designed as a straightforward guide to anyone writing or using strategy. The handbook provides advice on how to write a strategy, including templates, and explains briefly how strategy is implemented throughout the Department.

The information within the handbook is designed for strategies related to thematic issues and engagement, however corporate strategy writers can also use the handbook as a useful resource. The handbook supports the *Strategy Framework* (the framework), which creates a hierarchy of strategy, with associated levels of accountability and ownership.

What is strategy?

Strategy connects **where we are** with **where we want to be** and **how we want to get there**, and makes the connections that wouldn’t otherwise be made. Strategy is future-focused, establishing clear overarching objectives and the strategic pathway to achieve them. It aligns the Department’s work with whole of government direction, and supports innovative thinking about how the Department delivers its mission practically. Importantly, strategy gives a shared purpose as it helps people to understand why they do what they do.

How is strategy implemented?

We are a **strategy-led** Department. The vision and direction provided by our strategies guides everything we do.

Everyone in the Department plays an essential role in implementing strategy. No single line area owns end-to-end delivery of a product or activity, which means collaboration is essential to our success. The implementation of every strategy should typically follow the same pathway:



¹ The Department includes the Australian Border Force.

For many strategies, this pathway will flow through the Department, starting within Strategy Branch or another Policy Group branch and ending with delivery by frontline officers who maintain Australia's borders. Other strategies, like the Identity Strategy, will be implemented by almost every line area within the Department.

Each of the pathway's elements contribute to the successful realisation of a strategy's vision, and should be included in the implementation process.

Policy

Policy is the first step in implementing strategy. It provides the detail around our strategic objectives and responses, articulating why and how we will achieve them. It can include the development of policy mechanisms, enacting legislative change and amending regulations, and advocacy at industry, government and international meetings.

Operational Policy

Operational policy pursues practical policy or operational outcomes by defining measurable actions, milestones, resources and funding, and including effective monitoring and evaluation mechanisms. It provides detailed guidance for operational planning and supports the deployment of resources to specified activities.

Operational Planning

Operational planning supports the implementation of operational policy through directing resources, and training and deploying border force officers to where they can be of greatest effect.

Tactical

Tactical includes the actions of our frontline officers as they work across the border continuum in air, sea and land environments.

Strategy Branch

Strategy Branch helps set the strategic agenda for the Department, by:

- writing key thematic strategies
- ensuring the work of the Department is aligned to strategy
- providing advice to the Senior Executive and line areas
- considering the future environment and how it informs strategic direction and planning
- supporting other line areas tasked with writing strategy – this includes providing advice, expertise and templates to assist in strategy development.
- review of strategies developed by other line areas.

This helps ensure all strategy in the Department is consistent, coordinated, and aligns with *Strategy 2020* and the Government's objectives.

How to write good strategy

Good strategy is future-focused. It looks at where we want to be in the future and considers how we're going to get there. It also considers how the environment we operate in will change, and defines what that means for us. Tier 1 and 2 strategies, as defined in the framework, focus primarily in this space. Tier 3 strategies, which are targeted to a specific policy issue of importance, are designed to capture both what's happening now across the Department, including the ABF, and the future direction.

A good strategy can be revolutionary – it isn't limited by 'the way things are done now' but instead explores what can and should be done to get to the end goal. It generally has a stable, long-term approach and is not regularly revised unless there are strong reasons to do so. Frequent major changes that keep shifting the goal posts can make it very hard to implement the strategy and can be demoralising for line areas who never see the vision achieved.

A good strategy guides implementation along the end-to-end delivery model, across the Department and ABF, rather than for just one division or type of role. It encourages collaboration across the Department and external stakeholders. It is also flexible and doesn't necessarily limit itself to one product or system for reaching its objectives – this ensures the strategy doesn't become redundant if that system fails or a better system is developed.

It is concise and written in plain English that ensures anyone can understand its content, with or without any prior knowledge or technical expertise. It uses the attached strategy template and follows the advice of the Department's Style Guide, which is available on the intranet.

Strategies are not manuals, and should not explain how policy or operational delivery works in practice. While it can be useful for strategies to include high level planning information, where possible the detail should be left to implementation or enforcement plans. Plans and manuals are lower level documents that can be used support a strategy's implementation within a line area or more broadly.

Step One: Research and resources

Before and during the development of your strategy:

- **Talk to Strategy Branch**, who can provide assistance on writing at a strategic level and ensuring a future focus. They can also provide strategic subject matter expertise and advice on which other strategies should inform your strategy (see *Further Information*), as well as examples of well-written strategies.
- **Research your subject thoroughly:**
 - Read higher level strategies with which your document will need to align, as well as other strategies at the same level that are related or share a similar subject matter.
 - Find out about the strategic environment in which the Department operates and may operate in the future by reading Departmental, government and industry reports, studies and forecast scenarios, strategic intelligence assessments, and the wealth of information available on the internet or through the Department's library.

- Talk to experienced officers and experts across the Department, including the ABF, and in other relevant agencies to get a wide range of views, insights, information and intelligence on your topic. Use this research to develop and test your own conclusions about where the Department should focus its efforts within your subject field and why.

Step Two: Writing and review

- **Use the strategy template** attached to the handbook, without making any changes, to ensure your strategy is consistent with the Department's requirements, includes all necessary elements and complements other strategies. The template has two components – the one page strategy summary and the full-length strategy document. If you have any questions, call the strategy support team in Strategy Branch (see *Further Information*). You may find it useful to fill out the one page summary first and use it as the outline for your strategy document.
- **Provide your completed draft strategy to the strategy support team** for review prior to any formal consultation. The team reviews all strategies to make sure they align with overarching strategies, provide sufficient future focus and are consistent in terms of content and formatting. They can continue to assist following the review if changes are needed. It is useful to factor at least a week for this review into your timeframes.

Step Three: Formally consult and refine

- **Formally consult widely at a senior level.** Your consultation should reflect the end-to-end delivery model by including anyone in the Department with an interest or role in the delivery of policy or activities associated with your subject. Capability Branch, Corporate Group and Intelligence and Capability Group should also be consulted because of the finance, intelligence and capability implications of strategies.
- **Refine** your strategy based on the feedback you have received from the consultation, considering first whether the input is appropriately strategic or whether it is more policy, operationally or technically focused. Reflect on whether your strategy has the characteristics of a good strategy, and continue to talk to Strategy Branch as necessary.

Step Four: Endorsement

- **Provide** your strategy to the appropriate senior committees for endorsement, as outlined in the framework. It is important to note in your committee submission sheet that Strategy Branch has reviewed the strategy to ensure it aligns with the Department's mission and objectives.
- **Publish** your strategy. Provide a finalised copy to Strategy Branch, who will add it to the strategy register and will post a link to it on the dedicated Strategy intranet page (if a strategy is classified, contact details will be posted instead of a link). Advertise your strategy to stakeholders and line areas who will need to be involved in implementation, and offer to discuss it with them.

Step Five: Implementation

A strategy can only be meaningful if it is implemented efficiently and effectively across the Department, including the ABF.

- **Support the implementation** of your strategy by working proactively with line areas responsible for the development of policy to ensure they understand the strategy's direction as well as their role in promoting this direction through their communication with stakeholders, particularly others along the implementation pathway.
- The strategy's author should also **review the document annually** and revise it, but only if significant changes to the strategic environment require a change of approach in the strategy. Revised strategies need senior committee endorsement.

Further information

Topics	Section	Director
Strategy support team <i>Strategy 2020</i> , air and sea ports, border management, cargo, civil maritime processing and security, <i>Identity Strategy 2015-16</i> , migration, regulated goods, trade, travellers	Border Management Strategy	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Border Outlook, Horizon Scan, futures strategy, strategic forecasting	Alternative Futures	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Powers and decisions to detain; onshore immigration detention: strategy, facilities, management, values and standards	Detention Strategy	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Information management, information and data governance, information sharing, secrecy and disclosure, memorandums of understanding, cyber policy	Information and Data Strategy	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Illicit drugs, anti-money laundering, counter-terrorism financing, death penalty	Law Enforcement Strategy	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
National security, counter-terrorism, countering violent extremism, global security	National Security Strategy	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Alignment of strategy and departmental priorities	Strategy and Planning	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)
Transformative projects (e.g. illicit tobacco, illegal employment, joint DIBP/ATO data analytics) and advice	Strategic Research	s. 22(1)(a)(ii)

Templates


Each strategy has two components:

- the full strategy document
(see template for Tier 3 strategies, which has full instructions in the document – *Attachment A*)
- the summary one page version of the strategy
(use the below instructions to complete attached blank template – *Attachment B*).

The summary is designed to provide a snapshot of what we do and how we do it, and the key measures that are needed to build our capability to deliver on the subject matter.

The full strategy should expand on these points, and provide other essential information such as the strategic environment, as defined in the template.

How to complete the strategy summary template

SUBJECT STRATEGY 2016-20		
 Australian Government Department of Immigration and Border Protection		
OUR MISSION To protect Australia's border and manage the movement of people and goods across it.		
OUR ROLE Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit Cras eu mauris laoreet, pulvinar nibh quis	OUR FUTURE Donec malesuada congue eros a malesuada Praesent sollicitudin hendrerit tellus, quis scelerisque justo consequat mollis Aenean accumsan orci auctor risus posuere accumsan Duis fermentum dapibus tellus id commodo	OUR APPROACH Mauris vel leo nec ligula sodales eleifend Aenean fermentum ultricies lacus, vitae gravida est viverra non Aliquam nec magna quam Aliquam vitae fermentum nulla
BUILDING OUR CAPABILITY <div> <div> Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit Donec malesuada congue eros a malesuada </div> <div> Aenean accumsan orci auctor risus posuere accumsan Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit Donec malesuada congue eros a malesuada </div> <div> Aenean accumsan orci auctor risus posuere accumsan Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit Donec malesuada congue eros a malesuada </div> </div>		

TITLE and timeframe at the top of the page

E.g. Cruise Ship Strategy 2016-20.

OUR MISSION

All summary pages should have the Department's mission in this section: *To protect Australia's border and manage the movement of people and goods across it.*

OUR ROLE

Provide 2-3 short sentences that define the topic and the Department's management/delivery.
E.g. Manage the legitimate trade in tobacco across the border and collect border revenue to support the Australian economy

OUR FUTURE

This section should be a vision of where we will be if we achieve success in the subject field, in 3-4 short phrases. Each point should be a positive and realistic objective for the Department to pursue.

E.g. Automated, seamless and self-managed traveller experience

Harmonised systems and technology

Competitive advantage in global market

An inhospitable environment for criminal activity

OUR APPROACH

Provide 3-4 principles that are the foundation for the Department's high-standard of delivery in this field, and that support the fulfilment of the *Our Future* vision.

E.g. We analyse threats and manage risk through an intelligence-led, risk-based approach

We invest in technology and innovation

We pursue collaboration with industry and government

We have a dedicated workforce that is appropriately skilled and experienced

BUILDING OUR CAPABILITY

One of your strategy's functions is to identify what the Department needs to do to improve its ability to deliver to the highest standard in the subject field. This includes the identification of issues with delivery, and high level measures that are required to address these issues.

This section should list ideally 6-10 points that summarise these measures, from highest to lowest priority.

E.g. Implement streamlined, automated processing at specified ports and eligible vessels

Establish an integrated biometric-based identity management system

Formalise data exchange arrangements with Commonwealth and State/Territory agencies

Develop a comprehensive intelligence picture of the Australian illicit tobacco trade to drive targeting and investigative action